

CIX. *A Dissertation upon the Phœnician Numeral Characters antiently used at Sidon. In a Letter to the Rev. Thomas Birch, D. D. Secret. R. S. from the Rev. John Swinton, M. A. of Christ-Church, Oxon, F. R. S.*

Reverend Sir,

Read Dec. 7,  
1758.

HAVING, by the assistance of the Palmyrene numeral characters, lately made a discovery, which may perhaps hereafter be of considerable service to chronology; I could not longer defer, though now deeply engaged in other matters, communicating it to the Royal Society. Nor will the memoir containing this, I flatter myself, be deemed altogether unworthy the attention of that learned and illustrious body. For, unless I am greatly deceived, it will bid fair to ascertain, with a sufficient degree of precision, the Phœnician dates of several antient Sidonian coins, one of which was struck above a century before the birth of CHRIST, hitherto utterly unknown; and evince the notation of the Phœnicians, at least those of Sidon, when they first appeared, to have been extremely similar to, if not nearly the same with, that of the Palmyrenes.

# I.

A small brass coin of Sidon (1), now in my possession, exhibits on the reverse three Phœnician let-

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(1) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 1.

ters, that form the word SIDON, over the prow of a ship, the usual symbol of the city wherein it was struck. This coin, which is in good conservation, I formerly (2) published and explained. The characters however in the exergue, which I could then make nothing of, were not with sufficient accuracy described. This has induced me to transmit you another draught of the same medal, wherein proper care has been taken to remedy that defect. The two first of those characters, though somewhat imperfect, appear manifestly enough to be *Schin* and *Tzade*; as the former occurs on the Palmyrene (3) marbles, and the latter on several very valuable (4) Phœnician coins. The others so nearly resemble the numeral characters of the Palmyrenes, that they may undoubtedly be considered as pointing out to us a date. Which if we admit, the *Schin* and *Tzade* will seem to be the initial letters of the words שנת צדן, THE YEAR OF SIDON, or IN THE YEAR OF SIDON; as the elements *Pe* and *Schin* apparently denote פסח שנת, THE PASCHA OF THE YEAR, or IN THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR, on the reverse of the famous Samaritan coin of Bologna, published by Sig. Bianconi (5) not many years since. Nor can the phrase, THE YEAR OF SIDON, or IN THE YEAR OF SIDON, intimating the year

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(2) *De Num. quibusd. Sam. et Phœn. &c. Dissert.* p. 56—59. & Tab. II. Oxon. 1750.

(3) *Marm. Palmyren. a Cl. Dawk. edit. pass.*

(4) Vid: Hadr. Reland. *Palæst. Illustrat.* p. 1014. Traject. Batavor. 1714. Erafm. Froel. ad *Annal. Compendiar. Reg. & Rer. Syr.* Tab. VIII. &c. Viennæ, 1754.

(5) *De Antiq. Hebræor. et Græcor. Lit. Libel.* Joan. Baptist. Biancon. p. 31, 32. Bononiæ, 1748.

of the proper æra of that city, be looked upon as repugnant either to the Jewish or Phœnician genius ; a similar expression having been used, both in their writings (6) and on their coins (7), about the time that the Phœnician medal before me was struck, by the Jews. That the first of the numeral characters here stands for TWENTY, we may infer from the correspondent one of the Palmyrenes, to the form of which it is by no means unlike. This will likewise be confirmed by the dates preserved on other Phœnician coins, which will be immediately produced. The next, denoting a lesser number, and not representing FIVE, which we find always expressed by minute right lines on the Sidonian medals, must indubitably occupy the place of TEN. The six following strokes, after what has been just observed, will be acknowledged to add SIX to the foregoing numbers ; so that the inscription in the exergue will no longer remain a mystery, the whole only importing, IN THE YEAR OF SIDON XXXVI.

## II.

I have three other coins of Sidon (8), of almost entirely the same type ; only one of them exhibits a date in Greek numerals, and two bear Phœnician dates. The Greek numerals are ΕΟΤ, CCCLXXV ; and the Phœnician correspond with the numbers CXX, CXXVII, to both of which are prefixed the above-mentioned

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(6) 1. Maccab. i. 10.

(7) Hadr. Reland. *De Num. Vet. Hebr. pass. Trajecti ad Rhenum*, 1709.

(8) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 2.

initial letters. We meet with draughts of two similar medals in (9) Arigoni, adorned with characters, expressing the numbers CXXVIII, CXXX. All these coins present to our view a turritated head and a branch of palm, pointing out to us the country to which they belong, and on the reverse the usual symbol of Sidon. The year handed down to us by the Greek date EOT, is the 375th of the æra of Seleucus; and those denoted by the Phœnician numerals answer to the 120th, 127th, 128th, and 130th, of the proper æra of Sidon, as will be hereafter more fully evinced. Hence we may certainly collect, that these pieces were struck at Sidon in the years of CHRIST 11, 18, 19, 21, and 64.

### III.

Three coins of Sidon, different from the former, occur in (10) Sig. Haym, and seven (11) more in my little cabinet, whose type is altogether the same, with Phœnician dates, preceded by the two aforesaid initial letters, upon them. To which we may add five, preserved in the noble (12) cabinet bequeathed to Christ-Church, Oxon. by Archbishop Wake, and another in the valuable collection of the Rev. Dr. Barton (13), Canon of the said collegiate church, and a worthy member of this Society. On one side

(9) Honor. Arigon. *Num. Phœnic.* Tab. I. Num. 3, 6. Tarvisii, 1745.

(10) Nicol. Haym Roman. *Del Tesor. Britan.* Vol. i. p. 106. In Londra, 1719.

(11) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 3.

(12) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 3.

(13) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 3.

these medals all exhibit the head of Jupiter, and on the reverse the prow of a ship, the common symbol of Sidon. Most of them had various Phœnician letters at first imprest on the upper part of the reverse, and one of them (which is pretty remarkable) nearly the same characters there that appear in the exergue. The first of the coins mentioned here was struck in the year of Sidon 5. This has been perfectly well preserved, and is more curious than any of the rest; which were emitted from the mint at Sidon in various years of the proper æra of that city, *viz.* the 107th, 108th, 110th, 111th, 112th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, and 119th. We meet on none of these medals with the figure denoting TWENTY, used by the Sidonians, during the period I am now upon. It not a little resembles that which prevailed at Tadmor (14) in the reign of the emperor Claudius, about forty-nine years after the birth of CHRIST. The most antient of the Phœnician coins I am now considering preceded the commencement of the Christian æra 104 years, and is consequently 153 years older than the earliest Palmyrene inscription that has hitherto come to our hands (15).

## IV.

Some years since I published a small brass medal of Sidon (16), with the heads of Jupiter and Juno on one side, and the prow of a ship on the reverse;

(14) See the Phœnician Numerals in Plate xxxii.

(15) *Philosoph. Transact.* Vol. xlviii. Par. ii. p. 726.

(16) *De Num. quibusd. Sam. et Phæn. &c. Dissert.* p. 59—61. & Tab. II. Oxon. 1750.

but did not accurately enough describe the numeral characters, and two initial letters, in the exergue. I therefore take the liberty to send (17) you a new draught, perfectly well done, of that inscription. Two more coins of the same type I have since acquired, and another may be seen in (18) Sig. Haym. These four pieces only exhibit the years of Sidon 125 and 132.

## V.

My small collection likewise affords two (19) other Phœnician medals of Sidon, (20) and Archbishop Wake's noble cabinet one, of the same type, with different Phœnician dates in the exergue. To these may be added five, with the publication of which the learned world has been obliged by Sig. Arigoni (21). The anterior faces of these coins are adorned with a veiled head, representing the genius of the city wherein they were struck; and the reverses with a human figure leaning upon a pillar, and holding a branch of palm in its right hand. Several Phœnician letters also there appear, which may perhaps at first sight seem to render it somewhat doubtful, whether the medals belong to Sidon or not. But every suspicion arising from hence must immediately vanish, when we cast our eyes upon the two initial elements, and the numeral characters, in the exergue; which clearly enough indicate the pieces to have been struck

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(17) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 4.

(18) Haym, ubi sup. p. 107.

(19) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 5.

(20) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 5.

(21) Honor. Arigon. *Num. Phœnic.* Tab. I, II. Tarvisii, 1745.

at Sidon, in the 83d, 87th, 95th, 105th, 106th, 108th, 114th, and 116th years of the æra peculiar to that city. A Phœnician coin of Sidon likewise occurs in one (22) of Sig. Arigoni's plates, and another (23) in my collection, with the turrit head and branch of palm visible on three of the (24) medals above described, which indisputably appertain to that city, together with the very Phœnician letters and symbol impressed on the Sidonian coins now before me. This, exclusive of other considerations, that might be offered, must set the point I am here insisting upon beyond dispute.

## VI.

I have another brass Phœnician medal of Sidon (25), not a little resembling those above-mentioned, both in workmanship and size, presenting to our view on one side the head of Jupiter, and on the other a human figure with a lance in its right hand. This coin, which has never yet been published, is adorned with a Phœnician legend on the reverse, different from those of all the others that have hitherto appeared. I therefore judged that a draught of it would not be unacceptable, though the date impressed originally in the exergue (answering to the 26th year of Sidon) has a little suffered from the injuries of time.

## VII.

The next Phœnician medal of Sidon, which I shall take the liberty here to describe, is a small brass

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(22) Id. *ibid.* Tab. I. N. 5.

(23) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 6.

(24) See p. 793, 794.

(25) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 7.

one (26), now in my hands, with a veiled head on the anterior face, and the prow of a ship on the reverse. M. Bouterouë (27), who has published it, rightly asserts it to be a Phœnician coin. The year of Sidon, preserved in the exergue of mine, is 74; and that in the exergue of M. Bouterouë's, 73, though the first numeral character of the latter is somewhat deformed.

### VIII.

The last Phœnician medals I shall at present produce, in order to settle the point in view, are (28) two in my possession, intirely agreeing both in type and form, as remarkable as any of the others here touched upon. A similar coin has been published by Sig. Arigoni (29), and another (30) by M. Bouterouë; both of which, on several accounts, merit the attention of the learned. They exhibit on one side the head of Jupiter laureated, with a beard; and on the reverse a double cornucopia, together with three or four Phœnician elements, one or two of which are in a great measure defaced. A brass medal of Sidon occurs in Archbishop Wake's (31) collection, as well as one in (32) mine, with the head of Jupiter done exactly after the same manner as that on the pieces before me, and Europa carried by a bull

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(26) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 8.

(27) *Recherches Curieuses des Monoyes de France &c. Par Claude Bouterouë*, p. 33. A Paris, 1666.

(28) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 9.

(29) Honor. Arigon. ubi sup. Tab. I. Num. 2.

(30) Claud. Bouterouë, ubi sup. p. 24.

(31) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 9.

(32) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 9.



on the reverse ; which, exclusive of the inscriptions in the exergue, demonstrate the latter to belong to Sidon. The first of mine was struck in the 143d year of the proper æra of that city, and the second five years after. They correct the barbarous date assigned by Sig. Arigoni to his coin. M. Bouterouë has not favoured the learned world with an explication of the medal, of which he has given us a draught. Nor has M. l'Abbé Barthelemy, who likewise mentions this very coin, informed us to what place it appertains ; but contented himself with barely (33) observing, that the letters preserved on the reverse are Phœnician. I flatter myself therefore that I shall not be charged with plagiarism by this celebrated antiquary, in case what is here submitted to the consideration of the Royal Society should be so happy as to meet with the approbation of that learned and illustrious body ; not even by *only* acquainting the public, with a sort of *politesse* so peculiar to his countrymen, that it is now become one of the most distinguishing characteristics of their nation (34), “ that  
“ a certain Oxford doctor has done him the honour  
“ to *adopt* the explication he had given.”

IX. For

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(33) *Mémoires de Litterature, tirés des Registres &c.* Tom. xxiv. p. 64. A Paris, 1756.

(34) The whole note, here referred to, in the original runs thus.  
“ J’avois lû ce Mémoire à l’Académie en 1749, je le communi-  
“ quai dans le même temps à un étranger qui se trouvoit alors à  
“ Paris, & qui ayant passé tout de suite en Angleterre, fit part à  
“ un docteur d’Oxford de l’explication que j’avois donnée de la  
“ médaille de Jonathan. Ce dernier m’a fait l’honneur de l’adopter  
“ dans une savante Dissertation imprimée a Oxford en 1750, à  
“ la suite d’une autre Dissertation sur deux inscriptions Phéni-  
“ ciennes.”

## IX.

For the farther illustration of what has been here advanced, it will be requisite to observe, that two æra's were antiently followed at Sidon; the æra of Seleucus, and another peculiar to the inhabitants of that

“ciennes.” *Mémoires de Littérature, tirés des Registres de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres, &c.* Tom.xxiv. p. 60. A Paris, 1756.

For the better understanding of this note, it will be proper to observe, that the stranger therein mentioned was M. Brucker, Professor of History in the University of Basil; with whom I contracted an acquaintance when at Oxford, towards the close of March 1750. This gentleman then informed me, that M. l'Abbé Barthelemy communicated to him draughts of three Samaritan coins of Jonathan, prince and high-priest of the Jews. He added, that one of these exhibited the words ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ; which, according to him, M. l'Abbé Barthelemy interpreted of Alexander the Great, taking the piece to have been twice struck. This M. Brucker afterwards in a great measure confirmed, by a letter he wrote to me at Oxford; which I published intire in 1750, and endeavoured to prove, that the foregoing inscription was to be understood of Alexander I. king of Syria, and not of Alexander the Great. The Samaritan inscription, which M. Brucker only just touched upon, as is manifest from his letter, I likewise attempted to explain; producing proper vouchers, in support of what I advanced. Thus stands the fact, which seems to have given some offence to M. l'Abbé, stated in the most concise manner possible; and from it, thus stated, as I apprehend, are naturally deducible the following observations.

1. As I differed in opinion from M. l'Abbé, with regard to the words ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ, as well as in several other respects, and supported by indisputable authorities what I in all points advanced, without receiving from any person whatsoever the least information relative thereto; it very evidently appears, that I did not adopt M. l'Abbé's explication of the coin in question.

2. By publishing M. Brucker's letter, which I have still by me, intire, I both did him justice, and clearly acknowledged M. l'Abbé to have first discovered the medals it treats of to belong to Jonathan,

that city (35). On the Greek brass coins of Sidon, according to F. Frœlich (36), both these epochs seem

than, prince and high-priest of the Jews; and therefore have by no means endeavoured, as he would insinuate, to rob him of the glory of such a discovery.

3. As M. l'Abbé in effect owns himself to have seen my dissertation, and has (if M. Brucker rightly informed me) since the reading of his memoir, substituted my notion, relating to the words, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ, in the room of his own; some people may perhaps imagine, that I have at least as much reason to recriminate on this occasion, as he had to charge me with the *adoption* of his explication. Nay, as he expressly acquaints the public, that M. Brucker imparted to me the very interpretation of the coin he (M. l'Abbé) had before communicated to him, and as this interpretation most evidently makes it to have been first struck in the reign of Alexander the Great; every unprejudiced person, unacquainted with the elevated genius and extensive erudition of M. l'Abbé, will be strongly induced to believe, that there would be no great injustice in a recrimination. But far be it from me to retort the accusation upon M. l'Abbé. His uncommon learning, his singular modesty, his strict honour, his utter contempt of vanity and ostentation in every shape, so conspicuous to all the world, must set him infinitely above the reach of such an imputation. However, notwithstanding the superior merit and exalted abilities of M. l'Abbé, notwithstanding the known aversion of the French writers to the practice here hinted at, and their most generous and candid treatment hitherto of those belonging to the British nation, it will perhaps hereafter be thought expedient, by the ACADEMY OF INSCRIPTIONS AND BELLES LETTRES, not frequently to suffer an interval of seven years to elapse, between the reading and publication of their memoirs. For by such unaccountable delays, if often repeated, a handle may possibly be given to many of the *haughty islanders* of reflecting upon, or at least entertaining unfavourable sentiments of, some of the members of that illustrious body.

See *De Num. quibusd. Sam. & Phœn. &c. Dissert.* p. 61—72. Oxon. 1750.

(35) F. Henric. Nor. Veronenf. *An. et Epoch. Syromaced. &c.* p. 414—424. Lipsiæ, 1696.

(36) Erasmi. Frœl. *Annal. Compend. Reg. et Rer. Syr.* p. 113. Viennæ, 1754.

VOL. 50.

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to have been used. However, the supputation pointed out to us by the date on the Greek medal above-mentioned was undoubtedly made according to the æra of Seleucus; since otherwise the year exhibited by that date must have been nearly coincident with the 266th of CHRIST, which by those versed in this kind of literature will never be allowed. For had the piece presented to our view so recent a date, as Sidon first became a Roman colony in the reign of Elagabalus (37), above forty years before; the reverse ought to have been adorned with some other letters intimating this, as were those of the Sidonian (38) coins posterior to that event. As certain is it that all the Phœnician medals of Sidon, whose numeral characters have been interpreted here, acknowledge no other epoch than the proper one of that city, which commenced in the year (39) of Rome 643. This, I flatter myself, from the following considerations, exclusive of others that might, with equal facility, be offered, will even to demonstration appear.

1. The fifth year mentioned by the oldest of these coins cannot be the fifth year of the æra of Seleucus, because the Sidonians were then subject to Antigonus (40), in whose territories the supputation according to that epoch did not take place; and consequently the piece itself must have been struck in the fifth

(37) Joan. Harduin. *Op. Select.* p. 155, 156. Amst. 1709.  
Joan. Foy-Vaillant Bellovac. *Numismat. Ær. Imperator. &c. Par. Alt.* p. 97. Parisiis, 1695.

(38) *Iidem* *ibid.* & *alib.*

(39) F. Henr. Nor. Veronenf. *ubi sup.*

(40) *Diod. Sic. lib. xix.* Plutarch. in *Demetr.* Appian. in *Syriac.*

year of the proper æra of Sidon, nearly coincident with the 648th of Rome (41).

2. No dates ever occurred upon the medals of the Syrian kings presiding over the people of Sidon, either to F. Frœlich or Dr. Vaillant (42), who have so eminently distinguished themselves in this branch of literature, before the year of Seleucus 112; and therefore neither the Phœnician dates preserved on the aforefaid Sidonian coins whose numeral characters do not amount to 112, nor the Greek dates on others falling short of that number, can rationally be supposed to bear any relation to the æra of that prince. This certainly must be considered as a strong presumption, or rather an incontestable proof, that the last-mentioned Phœnician dates were deduced from the commencement of the proper Sidonian epoch, as from their genuine cardinal point. Which reasoning will by analogy extend, as the numeral characters exhibited by all the coins here explained are of the same kind, to every one of the rest.

3. None of the medals of the Syrian kings, with Phœnician letters upon them (43), hitherto published, bear any Phœnician dates. This, after what has been said, renders it extremely probable, that the pieces of Sidon I am considering were posterior to those coins; and even that their Phœnician dates referred to an æra different from that of Seleucus, followed by the Greek dates on the medals of the Syrian kings. Which if we admit, this æra could have been

(41) F. Henr. Nor. Veronens. ubi sup.

(42) Erasim. Frœl. ubi sup. p. 39. Joan. Foy-Vaill. *Seleucidur. Imper.* p. 1—150. Lutet. Parisior. 1681.

(43) Joan. Foy-Vaill. Erasim. Frœl. Nicol. Haym Roman. &c.

no other than the new one of the Sidonians, that commenced in the seventh century of Rome.

4. That the dates visible on these coins were supposed according to the latter epoch of Sidon, will be manifest from an examination of the Greek and Phœnician brass medals of that city explained, in (44) the beginning of this paper; whose type and workmanship are extremely similar, if not almost intirely the same. For this circumstance is to me an evident proof, that they could not have been struck at very distant times. Now if we take the Greek coin to have followed the æra of Seleucus, as was undoubtedly the case, and the others that peculiar to Sidon; the first of the Phœnician dates (45) will not be prior to the Greek one above fifty-three years, nor the last of them precede it above forty-three years. Whereas if we suppose the numeral inscriptions in the exergues of the Phœnician Sidonian coins to have been supposed according to the Seleucian epoch, the difference between the aforesaid dates will be five times as much; which with the similarity of workmanship and type, already observed, will be altogether incompatible.

5. As the Jews (46), about the time that the first of our medals was struck, denominated the æra of Seleucus, **THE ÆRA OF THE KINGDOM OF THE GREEKS**; we cannot well doubt but it went amongst the Sidonians, who were neighbours to the Jews, under the same denomination. From whence it will follow, that the epoch styled by them emphatically, **THE ÆRA OF SIDON**, must have been different from the æra of Seleucus; and conse-

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(44) See above, p. 793, 794.

(45) Erasmi Froel. ubi sup. p. 101.

(46) 1. Maccab. i. 10.



quently that which, after the 643d year of Rome, was peculiar to them.

The powers of the Phœnician numeral characters antiently used at Sidon, which I flatter myself are now discovered, having been for many ages unknown; the Society will perhaps not be displeased to see accurate draughts of the principal Phœnician medals, from whence they are deduced. I have therefore taken the liberty to transmit them (47) such draughts, which may be intirely depended upon. I have also constructed a table (48) of the numeral characters themselves, from UNITY to A THOUSAND; which will demonstrate, in the clearest manner possible, the great affinity between them and those of the Palmyrenes.

1. From this table it plainly appears, that the people of Sidon had no particular character to denote FIVE, whilst the Phœnician numerals here explained were in vogue amongst them; that they expressed TWENTY by a character, during that period, not very different from the correspondent one used at Tadmor; and that in all other respects the Phœnician notation then prevailing at Sidon was, in a manner, the same with that of the (49) Palmyrenes.

2. It may not be improper to observe, that two of the Sidonian coins I have been considering (50)

(47) See Plate xxxi.

(48) See Plate xxxii.

(49) It may not however be amiss to remark, that most of the forms of the Phœnician centenary and decimal numeral characters rather resemble the correspondent Palmyrene numerals of Gruter than those of Mr. Dawkins; as will be obvious to every one, who shall think proper to compare all those different characters one with another. *Philosop. Transact.* Vol. xlviii. Par. ii. p. 721, 741.

(50) See Plate xxxi. Fig. 5. & Arigon. Tab. II. Num. 11.



exhibit the Phœnician word 𐤇𐤍, equivalent to the Hebrew 𐤇𐤍, and Syriac ܐܢ ܗܘܢܕܪܐ, AN HUNDRED, instead of the centenary numeral character. This, in conjunction with the appearance of that character, occupying the very place of the term 𐤇𐤍, on others of those coins, first induced me to believe, that the inscription preserved by every one of them in the exergue could be nothing else but a date.

3. I shall beg leave farther to remark, that none of the indubitable medals of Tyre, adorned with Phœnician letters, as far as I have been able to discover, present to our view any Phœnician dates at all. This still more clearly evinces the second element prefixed to the Phœnician numerals in the exergue to point out to us the city of Sidon, and not that of Tyre; which (51), indeed, seems already to have been sufficiently proved.

4. From the foregoing observations we may likewise collect, that the coin assigned to Demetrius III. by Mr. Maffon, F. Frœlich (52), and Sig. Haym, exhibiting a Phœnician legend, without a Phœnician date, in the exergue, ought in reality to be attributed to Demetrius I. Those three learned men therefore have been guilty of a mistake in this particular. Nor can the head on this medal be denied to bear some resemblance to that of Demetrius I. (53) with a moderate beard, as it appears on a coin published by Dr. Vaillant, and in one of F. Frœlich's plates. That the letters A K, behind the head, in-

(51) See above, p. 791, 792.

(52) Nicol. Haym Roman. ubi sup. p. 100. Erasmi. Frœl. ubi sup. p. 111. Tab. XV.

(53) Joan. Foy-Vaill. ubi sup. p. 238. Erasmi. Frœl. ubi sup. p. 57. Tab. VII. Num. 1.

dicating the piece to have been struck in the twenty-first year of the proper Sidonian æra (54), as Mr. Maffon and F. Frœlich are pleased to assert, can never be proved. On the contrary, the improbability of such a notion may be inferred from two similar letters, behind the turritated head of the *Dea Syria* (55), on a Phœnician coin, which Mr. Maffon makes to point out the forty-first year of the proper epoch of Sidon; whereas, in truth, that piece seems to have been struck either in the reign of Demetrius I. or Antiochus IV. (56) many years before. Nay, that it was actually struck when Demetrius I. sat upon the Syrian throne, is rendered almost incontestable by a medal of that prince now in my possession, with a *Beta* behind the head on the anterior part, and the very reverse of the last-mentioned coin. From the former of which circumstances it farther appears, that the alphabetic characters MA, supposed by Mr. Maffon to denote 41, are by no means to be taken for a date. To which we may add, that the head on a Phœnician medal, with the two Greek elements AK behind it, published by Mr. Reland (57), is apparently that of Demetrius I.; and that the posterior part of this coin is nearly the same, in all respects, with the reverse of that supposed to (58) appertain to Demetrius III. by Mr. Mas-

(54) Nicol. Haym Roman. ubi sup. p. 101. Erasim. Frœl. ubi sup. p. 111.

(55) Nicol. Haym Roman. ubi sup. p. 105, 106.

(56) Joan. Foy-Vaill. ubi sup. p. 200. Erasim. Frœl. ubi sup. p. 63. Tab. VIII. Num. 30.

(57) Hadr. Reland. *Palæst. Illustrat.* p. 1014.

(58) Nicol. Haym Roman. ubi sup. p. 100, 101.

fon and Sig. Haym. But to wave all other considerations, relative to the point in view, that may occur, the features and turns of the face on the medals of Demetrius III. are so different (59), that no inference of any validity can be drawn from the pretended identity or similitude of them, in support of Mr. Mafson's opinion.

5. The Palmyrene and Phœnician numerals, deduced from coins and inscriptions, may perhaps be thought not unworthy a place amongst the arithmetical characters of various nations, formerly (60) collected by Bishop Beveridge; and consequently may be allowed to render somewhat more complete the chronological institutions, or rather the chronological arithmetic, of that learned and judicious author.

You will pardon the prolixity of this letter, which the novelty of the subject may perhaps render a little more excusable than it would otherwise have been; and believe me to be, with the most perfect consideration and esteem,

S I R,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

Christ Church, Oxon.

Nov. 17. 1758.

J. Swinton.

(59) Joan. Foy-Vall. ubi sup. p. 375, 378. Haym, ubi sup. p. 100. Erasmi. Frœl. ubi sup. p. 111. Tab. XV.

(60) Gul. Bevereg. *Institut. Chronologic.* p. 278—331. Bond. 1721.

# PHŒNICIAN Coins.

